

FRENCH 210
INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL CONVERSATION CLASS
Tuesdays: 2:00 pm – 2:55 pm

Instructor: Valentin Duquet
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Office hours: Wednesdays 4-5 pm; Thursdays 2:15-3:15 pm
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NO REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS OR PREREQUISITES, although it is recommended that students have completed FRE 201 or beyond.

Course description and learning outcomes:

This course is designed to provide you with the opportunity to practice and improve your communication skills in French. Emphasis will be placed on informal conversation in a variety of contexts, as well as discussions and debates of current events within Francophone culture.

Learning outcomes:

During discussions you will improve your vocabulary and grammar and you will learn to paraphrase and use circumlocutions ("talk around") to express complicated thoughts for which you may not have the precise vocabulary. You will also have the chance to ask questions and to interact with the others in a safe group setting.

Attendance policy and participation grade:

This class meets once a week for 55 minutes, and it is conducted entirely in French. Your attendance and participation are mandatory. Students are expected to arrive on time and to be prepared to contribute to discussions and interact with others. You will receive a daily participation grade, based on the quality and quantity of your participation. Lack of punctuality, disruptive attitudes and use of English will lower your participation grade.

You are allowed **only one unexcused absence** during the semester. Any additional absences will result in the lowering of your class grade, as you will receive zeros for those days.

Presentations:

Each of you will give two oral presentations during the semester and be responsible for leading the discussion on them afterwards. The choice of topic is yours, in consultation with your classmates and instructor. The topic must deal with a certain aspect of French or Francophone culture (your own experiences, cuisines, movies, music, art, books, fashion, history, society, politics, etc.) Be creative and think outside the box! It can anything that YOU like or that YOU are interested in. Feel free to draw parallels with American culture or other cultures as part of your presentation if you wish.

PowerPoint or Prezi presentations are preferred, but any use of visuals or material is welcome. If you include short videos or audio extracts in your presentation, those should be in French (French or English subtitles are fine). You can use a few cue notes and flashcards, but you will not be allowed to read your

script. Don't just read from your slides either, find the right balance and try to spontaneously talk about your topic of choice, as much as possible. Aim for a "TED Talk"-style presentation.

Presentations will last 15-20min, with 5min of questions and interactions at the end. Don't panic, it can be an informal exchange, and 15min go quickly—especially with a video embedded in there. Presentations should be interactive; end your first one with a quiz, a short game or a role play to engage with the class and test what we learned.

Your second presentation should be about a slightly more controversial topic, or at least a theme we can have a group discussion about. This means that while the format stays the same, the content should be more political, social, historical, or cultural. Instead of a Kahoot or a game like you might do at the end of your first presentation, display on your last slide **3 debate questions** to start the discussion about what you just gave us an overview of, in order to debate in a respectful environment.

The second presentation can be about any theme or aspect that can spark a conversation—including anything that you want to know more about or that struck you when you visited a Francophone place. Being able to express one's opinions and views is a main part of being fluent in a language and a culture.

Here's a few examples of topics—feel free to use others:

- The French university system—tuitions, costs, daily life. Comparing with the U.S.; pros and cons of each system.
- The French health care system—how it works, and comparing it with other systems.
- Social cues and cultural differences in terms of friendship, personal space, smoking, PDA, campus policy and etiquette, etc.
- Racial and inter-cultural dynamics and awareness in France. How is it different from other places and the U.S.?
- Minorities social movements, or any other kinds of activism.
- Politics and elections. How the French political system works / How the election process works / The different parties we have, and the differences with the American system (or any other system) / or even one presentation on one political party specifically during the election season.
- The presence and influence of technology and the media in/on our lives.
- How do you see the future, are you optimistic or pessimistic?
- A historical period or moment and its impact today, what lessons we can draw from it and how it still echoes the modern situation.
- Any research or insight you're doing in other classes that relate to the Francophone world and that you would like to tell us about—especially a current issue or something opinionated.
- etc.

Remember a few key points:

- I don't expect any of you to be an expert in any of these topics—start from something you're curious about, from an anecdote or something you experienced for yourself.
- Always start with definitions and context.
- Try exposing both sides of the argument.
- Feel free to compare different cultures / countries and how they view this aspect differently.
- Then tell us about your experience / what you think and why.
- Don't draw from Wikipedia; create your own line of thoughts.

- Finally, engage your peers with broad open-ended questions.

This is a dialogue, and of course this will be safe place for conversations. The presentation itself can be slightly shorter than your first one, providing that you facilitate the conversations afterwards.

Final course grades will be determined on the following basis:

Attendance and participation: 50%
Presentation #1: 20%
Presentation #2: 30%

CALENDAR : The schedule is available as a Google doc—please sign up on the document to secure a time slot. There are two time slots available per day of class. You can take your time to decide on a theme, especially for the second presentation. Feel free to contact me with ideas or questions.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1j1r7IWfiLkd_Kk8i7AnJ66znNV0ldUMT1u1wq-gI3_U/edit?usp=sharing

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work, as well as the integrity of exams and other sorts of assignments. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

DISABILITY SERVICES:

Students who may need academic accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to discuss their needs with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. In order to obtain authorized accommodations, students should be registered with the **Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498** and have an updated accommodation letter for the instructor. Accommodations and related support services such as exam administration are not provided retro-actively and must be requested in advance. For more information about services and policy, see [ODS: ods@sy.edu](mailto:ods@sy.edu).

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES POLICY:

SU's religious observances policy is found at:

http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm. For any accommodation, a student MUST notify--before the end of the second week of classes--his/her instructor of any religious observance date during the semester. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through *MySlice/ Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances* from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class. Speak with your instructor about specific accommodations once you have filled out the online notification form.

La Table Francaise

This is a place for informal conversation in French; all levels are welcome. You are encouraged to go to as many sessions as possible of *la table* throughout the semester for fun and practice. You will receive extra credit for each session you attend. Ask your instructor for details.

French Film Series

Culturally authentic films in a variety of genres (comedies, dramas, documentaries) are shown on Tuesday evenings; again, see your instructor to receive extra credit for this activity.

La Société Francophone

This student group will be hosting a variety of exciting events throughout the semester. Students are encouraged to participate and get to know the French-speaking community on SU's campus. Please consult their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FrancophSU/?fref=ts>

French Facebook Page

Please feel free to “like” our page and keep up with the latest French program activities, announcements, and current events: <https://www.facebook.com/SUFrenchProgram>